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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Editor's Note: The author of the September 26 Staff Note item entitled *Soviet Dissent: Names in the News* was [REDACTED]

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The Zarodov Meeting

Nearly two weeks have passed since Brezhnev and Konstantin Zarodov met in Moscow, but opinions continue to differ over the implications of that remarkable event. Most observers see a message in the meeting for West European communist parties, with Brezhnev throwing his support behind a tougher line on the issue of cooperation between communist and non-communist parties. Some, but not all, observers see a message directed particularly at the Portuguese communists. There seems general agreement that the meeting has implications for the European Communist conference, but disagreement as to whether it will anger the more independent-minded parties--and thus make the road to a conference even more difficult--or whether the Soviets have chosen to make a statement unilaterally and thereby remove one of the controversial issues from the conference agenda.

There is even less agreement on what implications the meeting may have for broader Soviet policy--including Soviet policy toward the US. Today we run three related articles, one noting the unusual aspects of the meeting, and two others commenting on the question of whether or not it has broader implications.

Some Unusual Aspects

It is virtually unprecedented for Brezhnev to grant a publicized audience of the sort he had with Zarodov on September 17. His reported meetings with Soviet officials over the past five years or more have been confined to important working conferences or ceremonial occasions such as anniversaries or awards. His reception last week of a group of Stakhanovites in connection with the 40th anniversary of the movement was a typical example. He does meet with local officials when out on junkets around the country, but this is not a parallel, and there was no ceremonial reason for the Zarodov meeting.

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The fact that Zarodov is a key figure in an ideological controversy only makes Brezhnev's meeting with him the more noteworthy. As noted before, he usually leaves the field of ideology to Suslov, and it is quite out of keeping with Brezhnev's political style to associate himself with an extreme stance publicly. He runs an open office and sees people of all ranks and political stripes, but these meetings are not publicized, and he has sought generally to accommodate opposing views and find a compromise position in private while standing above the fray in public.

Soviet press treatment of the event spotlighted it to an unusual degree. The announcement was carried on the front page of *Pravda* under a headline, "A Conversation with Comrade L. I. Brezhnev," that was apparently intended to attract attention. The same announcement has also appeared on the front pages of the four republic newspapers (Belorussian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian) available in Washington thus far. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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The Foreign Policy Pulse Seems Normal

It is hardly long enough since the Brezhnev-Zarodov meeting to draw an indelible picture of the meaning or significance of that event. Still, a number of things have happened over the intervening days, and they tend to argue against the case that Brezhnev's embrace of Zarodov symbolized a significant, or early turn toward tougher Soviet policies.

--Brezhnev himself seemed to be back in the balancing business only a few days after praising Zarodov, when he saw the US astronauts in the Kremlin. Given the hoopla that

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had surrounded the joint space mission, Brezhnev probably could not have avoided greeting the astronauts. But still, he did not seem anxious to pull any stops either. A Soviet audience would probably view the lengthy television coverage of the Brezhnev-astronaut session as a sign of normality in US-Soviet relations.

--A similar sense of normality emerges from Foreign Minister Gromyko's UN speech. It has the usual good words about the beneficence of detente, the Soviet Union's major contribution to this "main feature" of the international scene, and has some unexceptional words about the importance of US-USSR summit meetings, and other efforts to improve relations. Gromyko also went relatively easy on the "opponents of detente," making mention of their invidious work but without naming any names or dwelling on their threat to the "main feature." It might be possible to read a domestic angle into Gromyko's reference to "all those" who oppose overtly or "semi-overtly" the "policy line" on detente, but it is more likely that he was referring to critics in the US or elsewhere in the West.

Gromyko also took the occasion to make what may be the leadership's first public prediction concerning the coming party congress. He said that the congress "will" confirm and develop the foreign policy line, but he seemed to balance that promise a bit by saying that those who struggle for "social progress" etc., can continue to count on the USSR's active support.

--Gromyko's remarks on the Middle East in his UN speech and, more importantly, his three-hour session with Israeli Foreign Minister Allon, do not give evidence of

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any new tough policy that would match Moscow's displeasure with Sinai II. Indeed, Israeli press accounts of the Allon meeting indicate that Gromyko is prepared to go along with Secretary Kissinger's proposal for informal, multilateral Middle East negotiations. True or not, the very fact that Gromyko saw Allon indicates that Moscow is not about to associate itself firmly with the Arab rejectionists. In short, there seems to be little evidence of discontinuity in Moscow's Middle East policy.

--Moscow is going ahead with the visit by Portuguese President Costa Gomes this week. This is more important than most visits, and could even be directly related to the Zarodov affair, because of the centrality of Portugal to the ideological debate in Moscow. The Soviets are, in effect, putting their stamp on the sixth provisional government, despite the fact that that government represents a major setback to the Portuguese Communists. Their way has been made easier by the fact that Cunhal has been compelled to go along publicly with the government, but nonetheless it is not hard to imagine that there were those in Moscow prepared to argue against receiving the Portuguese. The piquancy of the situation will be increased if Costa Gomes is accompanied by his foreign minister, Melo Antunes. It was the latter who has been criticized by the Soviet media for leading the fight against the Portuguese Communists. It is not inconceivable that one reason that Brezhnev saw Zarodov and thereby made a gesture toward those favoring a tougher line on Portugal, was to clear the way for a Portuguese visit that would otherwise be interpreted as a major victory for the pragmatic approach to Portugal. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Yugoslav-US Relations

1 Yugoslav media, responding to directives from top party leaders, are becoming decidedly more favorable toward the US and more critical of the Soviets.

2 The new trend reflects both growing differences between Belgrade and Moscow and Yugoslav determination to reduce ideologically satisfying--but politically disadvantageous--attacks on the US. Tito wants to maintain good relations with Washington so long as tensions with Moscow continue and particularly as the succession period looms on the horizon.

2 In late 1971, Tito began a political rapprochement with Brezhnev that lasted until early 1974, when the Soviets were discovered giving aid to pro-Soviet subversives in Yugoslavia. Throughout this period, Yugoslav media took a harsh anti-US stance that sometimes exceeded the sharpest Soviet criticism.

25X1C [REDACTED] Yugoslav party leaders began to press for a more critical public stand against Moscow in January of this year. In June, Tito lent his personal authority to the drive. He criticized a select audience of publishers for failure to appreciate the gravity of the situation in Soviet-Yugoslav relations, and explicitly ordered a tougher line on Soviet affairs.

1 Belgrade is currently accusing Moscow of failing to take a constructive attitude toward the problems of the Third World, using the Sinai accords to divide the Arabs, and trying to dictate policy to foreign Communist parties. In one exceptional case, a Yugoslav newspaper even criticized Soviet accounts of assassination attempts against President Ford as "conjuring up an atmosphere in America" that encourages such actions.

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Meanwhile, Secretary Kissinger's speech to the UNGA and the US role in negotiating the second Sinai accords have been given unusually favorable press treatment. The Yugoslavs are taking care, however, to couch all their compliments in terms that leave no room for doubting Belgrade's continuing commitment to nonalignment. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Groundwork Laid for Tito-Ceausescu
Meeting Next Month

The stage has been set for the first bilateral summit between Tito and Ceausescu in over a year. The two leaders will meet sometime in late October.

Arrangements for the meeting were made by Romanian Premier Manescu during talks over the weekend with his Yugoslav counterpart, Dzemal Bijedic, and later at Tito's island retreat on Brioni with the Yugoslav President. Both sides assessed the talks in effusive terms and heralded the good prospects for a Tito-Ceausescu meeting.

During their last meeting in July 1974, Tito and Ceausescu agreed to set aside temporary differences over the Middle East--specifically Romania's recognition of Israel--and to re-emphasize their common opposition to Soviet moves in the world communist movement and in the Balkans. Subsequent Yugoslav contacts with Ceausescu have been handled primarily by Tito's principal subordinates, Stane Dolanc and Edvard Kardelj, who will play major roles in any collective leadership after Tito goes.

The atmosphere for the October talks seems especially favorable in view of recent Romanian co-operation with the Yugoslav internal security services in bagging one of the most dangerous emigre leaders of pro-Soviet subversives in Yugoslavia.

Few substantive details on Manescu's talks have been released, but both sides are forecasting that annual bilateral trade will treble to around \$1 billion by 1980. On the political side, it is safe to assume that Premier Bijedic outlined for Manescu his plans for a trip to China--the first ever by a Yugoslav Premier--early in October. (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY)

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Romanians Feted in Peking--Again

The visit of Major General Gomoiu, Romanian deputy defense minister and head of the military's higher political council, to Peking is sure to irritate Moscow.

At a reception in Gomoiu's honor on Sunday, the Chinese toasted the "profound and revolutionary friendship" between the two countries in their common "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, and hegemonism"--the last a codeword for Soviet efforts to dominate the international Communist movement. Gomoiu responded by underscoring the "fundamental interests of the two peoples." He lauded the army's role in defending the Chinese revolution and in safeguarding the nation's independence and sovereignty. The Romanian characterized his talks as a new contribution to cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries.

Four years ago, similar toasts during Ceausescu's visit to Peking touched off several months of Soviet pressure on the Balkans, including a well-orchestrated campaign against an alleged "pro-Peking, anti-Soviet, Tirana, Bucharest and Belgrade axis."

Gomoiu is the latest of a number of high-level Romanians who have traveled to Peking this month. Ilie Verdet, the party secretary for cadre affairs was there from September 5 to 9. Josef Banc, the party secretary for economic affairs is currently in China, along with Major General Dumitru, the head of Romanian military intelligence. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Czechoslovakia: Campaign Against Dubcek

2 Prague has launched a propaganda campaign which appears intended to demonstrate to critics at home and abroad that domestic dissidence is minimal.

1, 2 The regime recently began to release letters attacking Dubcek that were ostensibly written by individuals who were purged in the aftermath of the "Prague Spring." The letters seek to show that the former leader enjoys little support among the half million former party members.

, 2 On September 17, for example, the party's hard-line ideological weekly, *Tribuna*, published a letter by Jiri Cvekl, a former party member. The letter is a comprehensive attack both on Dubcek as a person and on the political philosophy of the Prague Spring. Another, attributed to Vaclav Simecek, who served on the party presidium in the 1968-69 period but was subsequently expelled for his "right-wing" activities, constitutes a significant endorsement for the Husak regime.

, 2 In addition to "proving" that support for Dubcek is dwindling, letters of this sort imply that those who were expelled from the party, but now realize the error of their ways, can expect rehabilitation and perhaps even a return to the party. Dubcek and his remaining friends, however, are viewed as guilty of both "subjective" and "objective" treason, and are beyond the pale. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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